
U50. Unstructured Recreation Policy

Title: Unstructured Recreation Policy

Policy No: U50

Keywords: Unstructured Recreation, Recreation Policy

Responsible Officer: Divisional Manager – Civic and Urban Services

1. PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

The purpose and overall objective of this policy is to provide a strategic direction for management of unstructured recreation in select activities including but not limited to:

- a range of unstructured sports undertaken for pleasure, away from the club competitive environment in social/ family settings;
- BMX and mountain biking;
- walking for recreation;
- dog socialising;
- skate boarding and inline skating;
- playgrounds;
- recreation fishing;
- hit up /kick/ graffiti walls;
- various exercise racemes;
- passive open area usage;
- water activities; and
- ball courts.

This policy has been authorised by the General Manager and Council and is available to all Council officials and the general public. It has been developed in consultation with staff and has been exhibited and consulted through the community and Precincts. Ownership of the policy rests with the Manager of Parks and Reserves and also the Compliance sections of Council, who are responsible for administering the recreation processes and conditions of entry to recreational parks and reserves or similar instrument under the state legislation requirements.

This policy directs actions required and Council's position in respect of unstructured recreation processes within the Manly local government area.

Associated strategy documents (other than related Council policies [see below]) include the following:

- Community Strategic Plan;
- CSP Delivery Plan;
- Manly Council Social Plan;
- Manly Council Youth Strategy;
- Aged Services Disability Plan;
- Sports Facilities in Manly Guiding Principals;
- Northern Sydney Aboriginal Social Plan; and
- Manly Council Management Plan 2010-15.

This policy and the associated working strategy documents aim to balance the needs of our community in relation to unstructured recreation.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Manly Council is committed to strategically providing for the benefit and use of the local community and the wider public as wide as possible a range of opportunities, activities and facilities for the use and enjoyment unstructured recreation.

3. PRINCIPLES

The underlying principle of this policy is that the provision of public recreation, in particular, opportunities for the use and enjoyment of unstructured recreation, is essential for the better government of the Manly local government area.

An associated principle of this policy is the recognition by Council of the paramount need to uphold Council's duty of care and commitment to public safety with respect to all public facilities and processes.

The principle-based objectives of this policy are as follows:

- to outline Council's position with regard to unstructured recreation;
- to give perspective to the unstructured side of recreation;
- to express Council's commitment to the provision of unstructured recreation in Manly and the future strategic direction for unstructured recreation in the LGA;
- to address issues related to parks and reserves occasioned by passive and unstructured recreation faced by Council;
- to provide a rationale for decision-making so as to ensure consistency in the management of unstructured type activities in the Manly local government area; and
- to propose a strategy so as to ensure that Council is inclusive and can encompass and improve its current recreation processes in the future.

The specific aims of Council's strategy with respect to the provision of unstructured recreation are as follows:

- to optimize the capacity of current recreation facilities in line with economic and social benefits;
- to achieve a balance between minimising risks and liabilities to the community whilst delivering sustainable unstructured recreation facilities;
- to achieve target outcomes for recreation in Manly in line with Council's objectives for recreation and delivery of services;
- to achieve efficient, cost-effective, and sustainable management of Manly's recreational facilities and open space by coordinating efforts across Council and others programs;
- to reduce the conflicts that may arise between structured recreation and unstructured recreation;
- to encourage unstructured recreation opportunities in Manly;
- to uphold Council's duty of care and commitment to public safety with all public facilities and processes;
- where possible, to look at regional inclusion in unstructured recreation possibilities;
- to support sustainable development and management practices; and
- to look at minimising costs associated with expansion of unstructured recreational facilities.

Council will use the following principle-based guidelines to ensure that unstructured recreation is sustainable and fair and that facilities are maintained and ultimately removed or replaced in a way that is sustainable, economically sound and socially acceptable. A range of unstructured sports undertaken for pleasure, away from the club competitive environment in social/family settings:

Retaining existing facilities

- Council will seek to keep established facilities particularly in areas undergoing a change in land use, that being considered to be the most cost-effective way to sustain recreation needs and maintain the relevant assets.

Creating new facilities

- Prior to the development of any new facilities, standards for maintenance and construction are to be reviewed or developed and the decision as to whether to proceed with any construction shall be made in consideration of the through life asset management costs and financial viability implications.
- Council will in enhancing and renewing recreation facilities, promote the need for the community to take ownership of such unstructured facilities and processes reviewing user pay principals to ensure longevity.
- Council will consult on new facilities and changes to existing facilities.
- Unstructured recreation facilities will be considered on the basis of available Council funding and community needs.
- Unstructured recreation facilities will only be considered if public consultation and outcomes from that consultation provide evidence that the facility is required and that it will be fully utilized at capacity for a large percentage of the time.
- Council has the available space to create such a facility, or there is a regional need and capacity to support the installation.

The installation of unstructured recreation facilities or processes should:

- promote public benefits to the community;
- not overlap with other facilities or services;
- be fully utilised if installed;
- promote the inclusiveness of the community, youth groups and variable user groups;
- should at all times make available the space to persons with disabilities;
- maximise the possibility of multi -purpose usage;
- take into account protected or heritage sites;
- consider the residential and associated requirements;
- promote shade and amenity at picnic areas, pathways, spectator areas, playgrounds;
- offer opportunities for education and showcasing benefits of unstructured recreation;
- enhance and protect habitats and waterways;
- encourage community participation in unstructured recreation programs to promote ongoing stewardship;
- be inclusive of disability access; and
- not always mean the installation of a structure.

Bushland Foreshore and Broad Scale Areas

- Unstructured recreation should not be allowed to degrade protected or environmentally sensitive areas or sustainable bushland.
- The construction of unstructured recreation facilities needs to be within the statutory controls in order to protect such sensitive areas.

Good Neighbour Approach

Council will adopt a 'good-neighbour' approach to managing unstructured recreation processes near property boundaries by undertaking proposed projects.

Recreation facilities whether structured or unstructured are major community assets. Considerable sums of public money are invested in their establishment and management, usually through local government or other public funding. As assets they must be properly valued and managed, which requires an appropriate budget on an annual basis for their management and replacement.

High priority to maintain existing public facilities, infrastructure and services

Council will give a high priority as respects the maintenance of existing public facilities, infrastructure and services.

Matters for consideration

There are a range of issues that will be considered by Council when selecting the type of unstructured recreational facilities or processes across the Council local government area. Those issues or matters for consideration include the following:

- topography
- wildlife habitat
- functional criteria
- performance record
- provision of shade to pavement and road
- safety/visibility
- degree of maintenance required
- the number of similar facilities available in the local area
- adjoining residential areas
- accessibility for all community needs
- work health and safety requirements and processes with respect to particular sites
- the need for the facility
- the means of funding and maintenance into the future.

Inspection

- Council will routinely carry out visual auditing of unstructured recreational areas and facilities and high visitation areas of parks (e.g., playgrounds, car parks, playing fields reserves and areas adjacent to private property boundaries).
- Council will prioritise visual inspections of during annual maintenance programs.
- Council will carry out additional visual and technical inspections in response to community concerns or suspicion because of health or safety or vandalism reasons.

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Council officials (including Councillors and Council staff and consultants engaged by Council) who are involved, directly or indirectly, in decision-making (including preparatory and recommendatory decision-making) with respect to the subject-matter of this policy.

Insofar as land is concerned, this policy applies to all land in the Manly local government area on which public recreation takes place or could take place.

5. DEFINITIONS

See the Dictionary at the end of the Local Government Act 1993 for definitions of various terms and expressions used in this policy.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

This policy will be implemented without delay once adopted by Council. Upon adoption this policy will be entered into Council's policy register, made available online and provided to all staff and any other people directly affected by this policy.

Council and/or the General Manager may, during a civil emergency only, set aside any policy terms to ensure public safety.

7. MONITORING AND BREACHES

Regular monitoring of compliance with this policy, relevant legislation and Manly policies and procedures will be undertaken and documented by the responsible officer for this policy.

Breaches of this policy are considered to be breaches of Manly Council's Code of Conduct and therefore invoke the relevant sanctions outlined in that Code. Persons in breach of any legislation may be subject to relevant criminal action.

8. REPORTING

No specific reporting is required by this policy.

9. POLICY REVIEW

This policy is subject to regular review at a maximum interval of two (2) years.

For the purposes of carrying out and giving effect to this policy, the General Manager may from time to time prepare, adopt or vary, and otherwise issue to Council staff, guidelines and directions relating to any aspect of this policy.

Any recognised change to relevant legislation; or directives or guidelines issued by agencies including the NSW Ombudsman and the Division of Local Government; or to Manly Council's related guidelines and procedures will activate an immediate review of this policy to ensure it remains current and aligned to best practice policies.

10. RELEVANT REFERENCES AND LEGISLATION

Local Government Act 1993
Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.

11. RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

Beach Management
Community Groups Financial Assistance
Dogs - Urban Dog Management
Foreshores - Public Right of Way – Ocean and Harbour Policy
Graffiti Management Policy
Graffiti Reward Policy
Hire Boat Operations - Beaches and Reserves
Noise Complaints - General
Precinct Community Forums
Risk Management Policy
Skateboards and Bicycles on The Corso – Control of
Sport and Recreation Facilities in Manly - Guiding Principles.

12. REVISION SCHEDULE

Minute No	Date of Issue	Action	Author	Checked by
20/12 OM	13/02/12	Endorsed and placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days.	CUS	CUS
61/12 OM	04/02/12	Policy Adopted	CUS	
	June 2013	Comprehensive Review		General Counsel
PS16/14	3 March 2014	Periodic Review	OM CSS	Manager Governance